w/ Cover Page

The Primitons: All My Friends



from the EP *The Primitons*
c. 1985 Throbbing Lobster

The Primitons were an Alabama-based outfit active roughly between 1984 to 1990. Because of their pop-country influences, jangly guitar and **Mitch Easter** production, they were usually lumped in with Lets Active, Guadalcanal Diary and R.E.M. in the outburst of Southern guitar pop of the mid 1980s. They found many devoted fans locally and in the music press, but troubles with record labels folding, lackluster production, and weak marketing kept the Primitons from reaching deserved stardom. All Primitons material was re-issued by The Arena Rock Recording Company in 2008/2009.

Pure Joy: Ocean



from the EP *Pure Joy*
c. 1986 (self-released)

Taking their name from a song by the legendary British new wave group the **Teardrop Explodes**, Pure Joy were among a handful of '80s Seattle bands that drew more inspiration from English neo-psychedelic rock than punk or heavy metal. Sounding more like a group from the U.K. than the Pacific Northwest, the band released their first LP, *Unsung*, in 1987. The band toured the West Coast with the Chameleons U.K., receiving rave reviews. The track "Ocean" was spun on college radio stations; however, Pure Joy didn't acquire much mainstream attention. In 1989, the group released its second album, *Carnivore*, on PopLlama Records, and then broke up. After Pure Joy's demise, frontman Rusty Willoughby formed the power pop band **Flop**.

The Verge: Tradition



from the EP *Habitual*
c. 1983 No Crust Records

The Verge were a relatively short-lived Albany, NY post-punk trio who recorded a small body of work during their early-80s lifespan, with an even *more* minute segment of those recordings having been made available for public consumption. The band married jagged, but sweet echoing guitar licks with **Thomas Rella's** dissonant vocals. The result were surprisingly intoxicating, not unlike what Killing Joke and Middle Class were dispensing around the same time. Definitely a must for all you KBD fans out there.

Crash Course in Science: Cardboard Lamb



from the EP *Signals From Pier 13*
c. 1981 Press Records

Crash Course in Science were a post punk band formed in 1979 in Philadelphia. They avoided the sounds of conventional instrumentation by using toy instruments and kitchen appliances to augment the distorted guitar, drums and synthesized beats. Championed by local radio station WXPN DJ Lee Paris they recorded their debut single "Cakes In The Home" for his Go Go label. This was followed by "Signals From Pier Thirteen" in 1981 produced by John Wicks at Third Story Recordings.

The Passage: Drugface



from the LP *Enflame*
c. 1983 Cherry Red Records

An intense and cerebral group from Manchester England, The Passage were active between 1978 and 1983. Mainman Richard 'Dick' Witts had previously been a percussionist in the city's celebrated Halle Orchestra, and this unusual background informed the unique sound of The Passage, combining a range of analog synth textures with layered percussion, harsh guitar, and incisive vocal 'texts'. In 2003, the entire Passage back catalogue was reissued and re-mastered by the LTM label.

w/ Pink Turns Blue

Brave New World: You Said, You Said



from the 12" EP *The Law of Series*
c. 1983 World Records Ltd.

This little nugget came to me via the Vinyl Obscurity website several years back. Scarcely little information is available on this band other than a Pennsylvania recording studio address on the vinyl sleeve and, well...the music which speaks for itself. An adept mixture of hard-rocking, well crafted 80s modern rock with some synth flair for radio appeal. Unfortunately, radio never found these guys, but the 80s Underground did!

System 56: In The Old World



B-Side *Metro-Metro* 7" single
c. 1982 Detour Records

Most people around northeast Ohio in the early 80s might remember the Cleveland band System 56 from the generous amount of local airplay they received for a handful of singles and a 12" EP released between 1982-1984. Unlike most bands however, their reputation was built primarily in the studio, with only five live performances offered during their short-lived tenure. This track here is a stellar B-side to the band's first 7" single issued on Cleveland's homegrown Detour Records in 1982.

Dolce Vita: Beginning All Over



from the EP *Dolce Vita*
c. 1984 Brain Eater

Dolce Vita's brand of MTV-friendly power pop/new wave wasn't especially innovative, but for their good fortune, pretty damn effective. I could easily picture this EP sandwiched in between the likes of the Red Rockers and Serious Young Insects, with Duran Duran occasionally elbowing themselves in. Hope that last part of the equation isn't a deal-breaker for any of ya'll, because there's some devastatingly catchy moments here. - *Wilfully Obscure*

Twice a Man: Sense



12" Single
c. 1982 (self-released)

Twice a Man are an electronic music group based in Gothenburg, Sweden, comprised around founding partners **Dan Söderqvist** and **Karl Gasleben**. Originally formed in 1978 as Cosmic Overdose, the duo changed their name to Twice a Man shortly before releasing their debut album, *Music for Girls*, in 1982. Throughout the 80s and up through present day the group has released numerous albums and has also written music for theatre (including several works for the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm), television, film and radio. The group are best known outside of their native country for composing the soundtrack to the computer game **Kula World**. Their most recent album, *Icicles*, was released in April 2010.

Chatshow: Red Skies



12" single
c. 1986 Red Rhino

There is scarcely anything available on this goth/post-punk trio formed in the UK in the mid 80s. The internet and blogosphere is virtually devoid of any detail on them other than links to a handful of singles and demos released during their short-lived tenure. The throbbing and supremely dynamic 12" single *Red Skies* is, by far, their highest water mark.

w/ Brave New World (feed) →

Pink Turns Blue: When the Hammer Comes Down



from the LP *If Two Worlds Kiss*
c. 1987 Fun Factory!

Pink Turns Blue are an influential, yet often overlooked band from Cologne, Germany. Formed in 1985, they quickly put out their first LP, *If Two Worlds Kiss* expressing a sound reminiscent of New Wave with very dark undertones and use of synthesizers, only to become one of the pioneers of the developing sub-genre of **Dark Wave**.

Department S: Monte Carlo or Bust



B-Side from the 12" single *I Want*
c. 1981 Stiff Records

Department S were a British New Wave band formed in 1980, who took their stage name from the 1960s TV series of the same name. The band evolved from a previous punk/ska combo, *Guns For Hire*, fronted by Vaughn Toulouse and also featuring former **Madness** drummer John Hasler. They debuted at the Rock Garden, London, on 24 September 1980, and subsequently released their debut single, "Is Vic There?", in December 1980 (re-issued on RCA a few months later). It was produced by former **Mott the Hoople** members Buffin and Overend Watts, but its initial success led to the better-equipped RCA Records re-issuing the single in March 1981. The group defied easy categorization, but recorded a session for the BBC Radio 1 DJ John Peel on 3 December 1980.

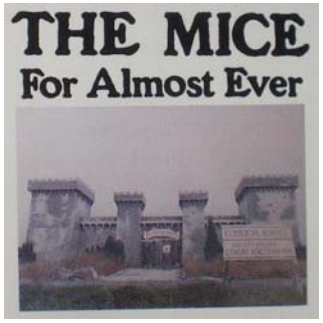
The Field Mice: Sensitive



7" Single
c. 1989 Sarah Records

The flagship band of the legendary Sarah Records, the Field Mice neatly encapsulated the label's trademark wispy, lovelorn pop sound and remain among the most beloved British cult bands of their time. Debuting in 1988 with the single "Emma's House," the Field Mice were originally comprised of singer/guitarist Robert Wratten and bassist Michael Hiscock; initially dismissed in the U.K. press as little more than twee pop fluff, over the course of subsequent releases like 1989's "Sensitive" and the So Said Kay EP, the group earned not only a devout following, but also grudging critical respect, in the process becoming Sarah's best-selling band.
- Jason Ankeny, AllmusicCom

The Mice: Not Proud of the USA



from the EP *For Almost Ever*
c. 1985 Herb Jackson Records

The Mice were a young band active in Cleveland, Ohio during the mid 1980s. The group brought together a range of influences infrequently heard at the time, and their moniker itself distanced them from the sometimes testosterone-heavy punk scene. But whether the energy comes from early punk or Brit Invasion anthems, there's plenty of it in many of these songs, aided and abetted by a very young Moon-esque drummer in Tommy Fox. In this environment, Bill Fox presented songs of passion and subtlety with mad genius pop hooks.

w/ The Lads

The Rangehoods: Rough Town



from the EP *Rough Town*
c. 1984 Big D

Some of you older folks may recall a Seattle power pop combo, **The Heats** who issued an acclaimed album, *Have an Idea* at the dawn of the eighties. Scintillating as that platter was, lead Heat **Steve Pearson** went onto a somewhat lesser known quartet, whose quality control was even more stringent, at least as far as the contents of this EP are concerned. Possessing a timbre almost identical to Tommy Keene, Pearson leads his fellow Rangehoods through five Plimsouls-ish jewels, without over or under-doing a god damn thing.
- Wilfully Obscure

Swing Set: Blackout



from the LP *Life Speeds Up*
c. 1986 Blackberry Way

Swing Set were a Minneapolis-based five piece who released just one full-length album on their hometown's Blackberry Way label. The band's polished, accessible modern rock sound would have been as much at home on the radio as any bigger band of their ilk - such as The Call, Simple Minds, or U2. Unfortunately, they were relegated to absolute obscurity following this one and only release. Thankfully, the band filmed a couple of performance videos that are now immortalized on YouTube. A fleeting moment in time of a band that could have been.

Leisure Process: Love Cascade



12" single
c. 1982 Epic Records

Leisure Process was a British New Wave duo formed in the early 1980s. They consisted of Ross Middleton, previously of the Glasgow post-punk band **Positive Noise**, and session sax player Gary Barnacle. Four singles were released (one credited to 'Leisure Process International') before their split. They were signed to Epic Records and all singles were produced by **Martin Rushent**.

Serious Young Insects: Be Patient



from the LP *Housebreaking*
c. 1982 Epic Australia

At times, this Melbourne, Australian trio, originally a five-piece, resembles the Police — with intricate, subtle rhythms smoothly interwoven with fluid guitar and bass lines — but these guys (as the band's handle might indicate) have more whimsical ideas than that. There's a song called "I Want Cake" which is simply the title chanted, mantra-like, over a pulsing dance instrumental. Other tunes — "Parents Go Mental," "Why Can't I Control My Body?" — play up an XTC-like side, although there are evident traces of the Jam and others as well. The Insects' playing is excellent and their tunes well-developed. *Housebreaking* is a strange record and well worth finding.
- Ira Robbins, Trouser Press

w/ Rangehoods (feed) →

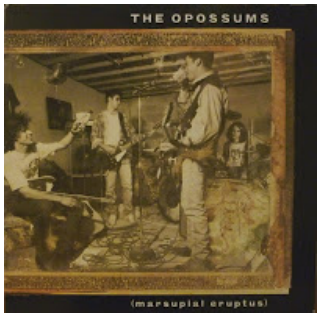
The Lads: Neighborhood Kids



from the LP *Out From the Shadows*
c. 1983 UNRecords

There is not much to be found on this woefully obscure Boston area band who released only one full-length album during their short tenure in the early 80s. Released on local label UNRecords in 1983, *Out From the Shadows'* **lead off track "Neighborhood Kids" charges out of the gate with frenetic energy and a supremely catchy hook that deftly mixes power pop and new wave elements.**

The Opossums: My Thing



from the LP *Marsupial Eruptus*
c. 1989 Picnic Horn Records

The Opossums were an Ann Arbor, Michigan based rock n roll outfit who bore very strong similarities to Mercyland (likely a coincidence), and to a lesser extent the Smithereens and Nova Mob. While the chap on the left side of the album jacket looks suspiciously like Paul Westerberg circa 1985, the closest the Opossums come to mimicking the Mats might be "Alphabet Roadway," easily *Marsupial Eruptus*' most aggressive moment, and perhaps finest. Apparently, the Picnic Horn Records label was also associated with the marginally more popular **Holy Cows**, if that's worth anything.
- Wilfully Obscure

The Spliffs: Never Say Goodbye



from the LP *House of Seven*
c. 1987 Revolution Records

The Spliffs were a jangle pop band from Hyde Park in Townsville, Australia. They were made up of members Jamie Foresburg (guitar), John Watson (bass/vocals), Ian Christensen (vocals), and Tim Corcoran (guitar/vocals). They flipped around who would do the drumming. During their brief tenure, they produced a three song EP and subsequently a full-length album, *House of Seven*, in late 1987. Watson later became a successful music journalist in Australia.

Something Happens: Burn Clear



from the LP
Been There, Seen That, Done That
c. 1988 Virgin Records

Something Happens were an Irish pop-rock band whose brief heyday in the late 80s/early 90s began with a formidable debut album *Been There, Seen That, Done That*, released on Virgin records in 1988. Their second album, 1990's *Stuck Together With God's Glue* was equally infectious and contained a number of hit singles. Although they were a very popular band in Ireland, international success eluded them and they were ultimately dropped. This led to t-shirts bearing the legend "Something Happens are no longer Virgins." Today, the band play occasional gigs but are no longer recording new material.

w/ The Primitons

(feed) →

A DATE: NOISE REDUCTION: ON - OFF - _____	B DATE: NOISE REDUCTION: ON - OFF - _____
1. The Primitons – All My Friends	12. Something Happens – Burn Clear
2. Pure Joy – Ocean	13. The Rangehoods – Rough Town
3. Twice a Man – Sense	14. Swing Set – Blackout
4. Chatshow – Red Skies	15. The Field Mice – Sensitive
5. Pink Turns Blue – Hammer Comes Down	16. The Mice – Not Proud of the USA
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10. The Opossums – My Thing	21. Crash Course in Science – Cardboard Lamb
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Special thanks to the following for their invaluable contributions to this compilation:
Wilfully Obscure - http://wilfullyobscure.blogspot.com/
Vinyl Obscurity - http://vinylobscurity.blogspot.com/

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